



Department of Justice

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FOUR MORE INDICTED IN BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA, ON DISASTER RELIEF FRAUD CHARGES

BATON ROUGE, LA – United States Attorney David R. Dugas announced today that four more Louisiana residents have been indicted on fraud charges related to a hurricane disaster relief program.

MARION L. FELDER, age 33, of Hammond, Louisiana, and LATRISHA L. GREEN, age 25, of Hammond, Louisiana, were each charged in an indictment with three counts of wire fraud in connection with the filing of fraudulent claims for disaster unemployment assistance (DUA). The Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) provided funding for a variety of disaster-related programs, including disaster unemployment assistance. The Louisiana Department of Labor (LDOL) administered the DUA program for residents of the State of Louisiana. DUA provided financial assistance to individuals whose employment had been interrupted or lost as a direct result of a major disaster declared by the President of the United States. The indictments allege that FELDER and GREEN each filed fraudulent claims for DUA benefits, falsely claiming they were unemployed due to Hurricane Katrina. It is further alleged that the filing of these false claims caused funds to be transmitted from the LDOL into Chase debit card accounts set up by LDOL for access by assistance recipients – in this case, FELDER and GREEN. The charges resulted from an investigation conducted by the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Inspector General. If convicted, FELDER and GREEN each face a maximum sentence of twenty years imprisonment, a \$250,000 fine, or both, per count.

THADDEUS JOHNSON, JR., age 29, of Clinton, Louisiana, and SUSAN J. JOHNSON, age 50, of Clinton, Louisiana, were each charged in an indictment with nine counts of wire fraud in connection with the filing of fraudulent claims for Hurricane Katrina disaster assistance benefits. In response to Hurricane Katrina, FEMA made available rental assistance payments to qualified individuals in need of such assistance. The indictment alleges that from in or about June 2006 through in or about August 2007, THADDEUS JOHNSON, JR., was living rent-free with his mother, SUSAN J. JOHNSON. During this time period, the indictment alleges that SUSAN J. JOHNSON created and signed false and fraudulent rent receipts that appeared to show that THADDEUS JOHNSON, JR., had paid monthly rent. It is alleged that the fraudulent receipts were submitted to FEMA in support of claims for rental assistance payments, causing funds totaling \$10,731.40 to be transferred by FEMA into a bank account accessed by THADDEUS JOHNSON, JR. The charges resulted from an investigation conducted by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Office of Inspector General. If convicted, THADDEUS JOHNSON, JR. and SUSAN J. JOHNSON each face a maximum sentence of twenty years imprisonment, a \$250,000 fine, or both, per count.

Today's indictments bring the total number of individuals who have been charged in the Middle District of Louisiana with violations related to hurricane disaster relief funds to one hundred sixty-one.

In September 2005, Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales created the Hurricane Katrina Fraud Task Force, designed to deter, investigate and prosecute disaster-related federal crimes such as charity fraud, identity theft, procurement fraud and insurance fraud. The Hurricane Katrina Fraud Task Force – chaired by Assistant Attorney General Alice S. Fisher of the Criminal Division – includes the FBI, the U.S. Inspectors General community, the U.S. Secret Service, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, the Executive Office for United States Attorneys and others.

For further information, contact David R. Dugas, U.S. Attorney for the Middle District of Louisiana, or Lyman Thornton, First Assistant U.S. Attorney, at (225) 389-0443. Anyone suspecting criminal activity involving disaster assistance programs can make an anonymous report by calling the toll-free Hurricane Relief Fraud Hotline, 1-866-720-5721, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, until further notice. Information can also be emailed to the Hurricane Katrina Fraud Task Force at HKFTF@leo.gov or sent by surface mail, with as many details as possible, to Hurricane Katrina Fraud Task Force, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-4909.

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